



Wisconsin's Conservation Crossroads

It's your choice.

Wisconsin offers great hunting and fishing, thanks in large part to the support hunters and anglers have provided in past years.

But now Wisconsin's **wardens** and **fish and wildlife biologists** face a serious situation. Current fishing and hunting fees, some the same price since 1992 and 1997, can't sustain current conservation programs and cover inflation, rising fuel prices and other operational costs. Conservation programs will face a projected **\$20 million deficit by the end of 2007**, despite significant downsizing and administrative belt-tightening.

A modest increase in license fees will keep Wisconsin's conservation budget in balance. Hunters and anglers can choose to support raising fees or cutting fish, wildlife and warden programs and services.

Proposed fee increases will only allow the current downsized conservation programs to continue. Without a fee increase, hunting and fishing opportunities and services will be cut even more.

Here are a few of the expected cuts.

- 25 retired wardens won't be replaced, leaving 180 wardens to patrol 35 million acres, 15,000 lakes, 44,000 river miles.
- Musky stocking will be cut 50%, walleye 60%, pike 30% and brook trout 70%.
- 60,000 acres of public hunting leases won't be renewed.

Want to learn more? dnr.wi.gov/invest

How Wisconsin's Fish & Wildlife Account operates

Licenses are a small part of the cost of fishing or hunting compared to boats, tackle, guns, ammo, gas, and travel, but they're the most important source of revenue --73 percent -- for the Fish & Wildlife Account.

The Fish & Wildlife Account is Wisconsin's safety deposit box for fish and wildlife programs. By law, it pays only for programs that support hunting and fishing, and is subject to state and federal audits. Different accounts pay for Stewardship lands and environmental programs.

Historically, license fees increased every four years to generate enough revenue to maintain programs and cover inflation and other foreseeable financial needs during the four-year-period. DNR's careful management of the account and tribal gaming money allowed fees to stay the same longer than expected in the late 1990s and early 2000s. By the time DNR asked for increases, some fees had been the same for nearly a decade.

In 2003, lawmakers granted some fee increase, but less than needed. Current fees won't generate enough money to cover inflation and sustain conservation programs in 2005-2007. Despite downsizing and significant administrative belt-tightening, the Fish & Wildlife Account faces a \$20 million deficit by the end of 2007 if no changes are made.

Belt-tightening, budget controls unique in government

Conservation programs have seen little or no growth since 1997. In fact, Fish & Wildlife Account spending between 1992-2004 grew at the same rate as inflation. The 55 percent increase over those 12 years was well below the 62 percent increase in overall state spending.

DNR, including conservation programs, have been downsized to address the state's budget deficit. Since 2003, DNR has held open dozens of conservation jobs, permanently cut 17 warden, fish, wildlife, and lands jobs, closed one fish hatchery, cut pheasant stocking 75%, eliminated 90 seasonal deputy wardens, ended some hunting land leases, reduced service center hours and took a one-time \$6.8 million cut in 2004 and a \$4 million cut in 2005 to conservation programs. DNR also has reduced Fish & Wildlife Account spending on administrative functions supporting hunting and fishing to 9%, well under the 16% statutory limit.

Even with these cuts and more required downsizing for 2005-2007, current conservation programs and services can't be sustained by fees that in some cases have remained the same since 1992 or 1997. **It's time to increase fees or cut conservation programs and services.**

Make your voice heard!

Share your views with your legislator and members of the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee. Find your legislator and committee members online at www.legis.state.wi.us



Conservation programs...

1.4 million licensed anglers
22 million days fishing
#2 ranked U.S. fishing destination
69 million fish caught
15,000 lakes, 44,000 stream miles
Two Great Lakes
260 miles of Mississippi River
Wild fishing on 90% of waters
30 million fish stocked yearly
\$1.2 billion in retail sales
\$2.3 billion economic impact
26,000+ jobs
\$90 million in tax revenues



A big bang for your buck!

716,000 licensed hunters
9.6 million days hunting
Hunts spanning every season
Seasons for 30+ species
6 million public hunting acres
#2 deer harvest in nation
\$960 million in retail sales
\$1.7 billion economic impact
19,000+ jobs
\$52 million in tax revenues

Proposed fees	Current Fees	Proposed Fees
FISHING LICENSES		
Resident annual	\$17	\$20
Resident husband and wife	\$29	\$35
Resident senior annual	\$7	\$10
Resident disabled fishing license	\$7	\$10
Resident sturgeon hook & line	\$0	\$20
* Nonresident sturgeon hook & line	\$0	\$50
* Other nonresident fishing fees increased in 2004		
FISHING STAMPS		
Inland trout	\$7.25	\$10
HUNTING LICENSES		
Resident gun deer	\$20	\$32
Resident archery	\$20	\$32
Resident small game	\$16	\$20
Resident senior small game	\$8	\$10
Resident Class A bear	\$45	\$49
Resident Wild turkey license	\$13	\$15
Resident extra turkey permit	\$ 0	\$10
Nonresident extra turkey permit	-	\$15
HUNTING STAMPS		
Stocked pheasant permit**	-	\$10
Pheasant Stamp	\$7.25	\$10
Ruffed grouse/woodcock stamp	-	\$10
Waterfowl stamp	\$7	\$10
COMBINATION LICENSES		
Resident sports	\$45	\$64
DUPLICATE LICENSES		
Archery - w/carcass tags	\$13	\$15
Archery - w/o carcass Tags	\$10	\$12
Gun Deer	\$13	\$15
Fishing	\$9	\$10
Patron - w/Carcass Tags	\$13	\$15
Patron w/o Carcass Tags	\$10	\$12
Sports - w/Carcass Tags	\$13	\$15
Sports - w/o Carcass Tags	\$10	\$12
Other hunting licenses	\$8	\$12
**The permit would be required to hunt pheasants on state lands stocked with the birds; fees would support the stocking program.		



For the price of a fishing lure or box of ammo, Wisconsin hunters and anglers can prevent deep cuts in the conservation programs and services that make their hunting and fishing better now and in the future.

Expected cuts to fish, wardens, wildlife if NO or partial fee increase



Cuts hit the field hardest; that's where most DNR jobs are:

94 % of 205 wardens
93% of 272 fish staff
90% of 187 wildlife

If NO fee increase, planned reductions include:

- Cut 25 of 205 conservation wardens
- Cut \$3.1 million from wildlife program if no new money for CWD
- Cut 30 wildlife jobs
- Cut wildlife population surveys
- Eliminate habitat management on state land
- Close wildlife education centers
- Cut 6 land planning jobs
- Cut \$2.14 million from the fisheries program.
- Cut 27 fisheries jobs
- Stop operations at 2 more fish hatcheries, one Lake Michigan egg collection weir, most outlying ponds
- Cut musky stocking by 50% and walleye by 50%
- Cut northern pike stocking by 30%
- Cut all inland trout production by up to 70%
- Cut warm water habitat work 50%, trout habitat 25%
- Close some service centers
- Shift more public info work to wardens, biologists

Planned cuts if partial fee increase granted include:

- Cut 13 of 205 conservation wardens
- Cut \$1.2 million from the fisheries program
- Cut 15 fish jobs
- Close another fish hatchery
- Cut musky stocking 50 %, pike stocking 30%
- Eliminate extended growth walleye stocking
- Cut inland brook trout stocking 70%, rainbows 25 %.
- Cut warm water habitat projects by 50%
- Cut trout habitat work 15% due to vacancies
- Cut \$2.4 million from the wildlife program if no new money for CWD
- Cut 15 wildlife jobs
- Further reduce hours and/or close service centers
- Shift more public info work to wardens, biologists

Hunters, anglers and trappers get great value for their money ...and memories to last a lifetime



In 2004:

- Record archery harvest of 103,571 deer
- Second highest total deer harvest ever, 518,630 deer
- Spring turkey harvest up 10% to 47,373
- 3,063 bear harvested with a 62% hunter success rate
- More than 100 Learn to Hunt programs conducted
- More than 1,100 hunter education programs offered
- 18,000 acres of public hunting, fishing lands added



- Highest Lake Michigan chinook harvest since 1987
- 2nd highest walleye catch rates in Northwoods in 15 years
- Record 36 lb, 8.9 oz. brown trout caught in Lake Michigan
- 188 lb, 79.5 in. lake sturgeon speared on Lake Winnebago
- 10,000+ miles of trout streams, 40% of them Class 1



How DNR improves your hunting and fishing and meets your customer service needs

Fisheries

- Maintain a network of fish biologists and technicians statewide
- Conduct scientifically-based management on 15,000 lakes, 44,000 miles of streams plus the Great Lakes
- Improve 25-30 miles of trout stream habitat yearly with stamp money
- Produce up to 80 million fish yearly for stocking
- Monitor fish populations
- Protect critical habitat
- Develop and maintain boat launches
- Monitor Great Lakes commercial and sport fisheries
- Sample fish for mercury, PCBs and other potentially harmful contaminants
- Sponsor kids' fishing clinics and train volunteer instructors
- Produce and distribute information for anglers

Wildlife

- Monitor wildlife population trends
- Manage overabundant wildlife populations
- Protect, restore & improve habitat
- Protect & restore rare species
- Manage 500,000 acres public lands
- Develop regulations, issue permits, reimburse farmers
- Produce & stock 30-60,000 pheasants
- Inform and educate the public
- Conduct research, monitor diseases
- Control damage caused by wildlife

Facilities and Lands

- Use Stewardship and federal money to acquire, manage, maintain public hunting grounds, fisheries properties, boat access sites
- Design and build public use facilities for hunting and fishing
- Add 15,000+ acres of public hunting. And fishing lands annually

Conservation wardens

- Enforce fishing, hunting, trapping laws
- Inform and educate the public
- Provide recreational safety training and enforcement
- Manage car-killed deer disposal

Licensing

- Manage computerized licensing system, support 1,500 vendors
- Issue harvest permits and licenses
- Interpret rules and regulations
- Distribute fish and wildlife regulations booklets and information

Administration and support

- Provide computer support
- Work with public to develop policies and regulations
- Produce public, media information
- Train teachers on conservation topics
- Provide outdoors education for kids via popular EEK! Internet site

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